Unlike other languages in the area, Karuk contains only one series of obstruents: *p, t, č, k* and glottal stop *ʔ*. Fricatives are *f, θ, s, š, x,* and *h*. With a few exceptions, *š* is an automatic alternant of *s* following syllables containing *i* or *y*. Sonorants include *v*, described as an unrounded bilabial spirant, an alveolar flap *r*, and palatal glide *y*. Obstruents and nasal sonorants are automatically lengthened in certain contexts defined by syllable weight. Apex vowels *i, a,* and *u* occur both short and long, but the mid vowels are always long: *e·* and *o·*. There are three pitch accent distinctions, termed acute (strong stress, high level pitch), circumflex (strong stress, falling pitch), and no stress: *pá·h* 'boat' versus *pa·h* 'peppernut'. Morphophonemics are complex.

Mithun, Marianne. 1999. The Languages of Native North America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.